

WABASH RIVER HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION
Meeting minutes-January 14, 2004
Indiana Government Center South, Training Center-Room 4
Indianapolis, Indiana

Members present:

Cass County-Mercedes Brugh
DNR-Steve Morris
Huntington County-Mike Mettler
Miami County-Ken Einselen
Parke County-John Isaacs
Posey County-Thomas Straw
Sullivan County-John Gettinger
Tippecanoe County-Norman (Lucky)
Neiburger
Vermillion County-Mike Craig
Vigo County-Keith Ruble

Proxies:

Adams County-Lucky Neiburger
Allen County-Lucky Neiburger
Jay County-Lucky Neiburger
Wabash County-Lucky Neiburger
Warren County-Lucky Neiburger

Voting members not represented:

Carroll County
Fountain County
Gibson County
Knox County (proxy sent late)
Wells County

Non-voting members present:

Martha Clark Mettler-IDEM
Malia Savarino-DNR-DHPA
Cheri Wagner-Dept. of Commerce,
Tourism

Non-voting members not present:
INDOT

Commission and DNR staff present:

Susan Benner-WRHCC Exec. Director
Dale Brier-DNR Outdoor Recreation
Eric Myers-DNR Indiana Heritage Trust
Cynthia Webb-DNR Outdoor Recreation

Others present:

Marianna Weinzapfel-Dept. of
Commerce, Tourism
Rory Robinson-NPS-RTCA
Janet Fawley-Logansport Parks
Ruth Isaacs
Clayton Taylor - WFYI

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Lucky Neiburger called the meeting to order at 1:15 pm. All attendees introduced themselves.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 12, 2003 MEETING MINUTES

Minutes were approved as written.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

None

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Susan Benner gave everyone printouts of the Executive Director's report, which will be attached to the minutes. Susan mentioned that at the time she printed the report she had no quote from PEN Products about the Wabash River Heritage Community Signs. Since then she has received a quote from them. Susan handed out printouts with the information. Based on a metal rectangular sign 24" x 36" there is a one time fee for set up fee of \$230.01 per color. The color Wabash Heritage Corridor Community symbol looks as if there are 5 colors black, brown, green, blue and gray for a total setup cost of \$1,150.05. This is just a one-time fee. PEN Products will have the art on file if in a year we wanted to produce more signs. The individual sign themselves cost \$56.00 each

Susan introduced Clayton Taylor, vice-president of productions with WFYI and he spoke about developing a video on the Wabash River. There was discussion about this project. The WRHCC's role will be to set a list of priorities and issues to be addressed in the video, how the video will be used and by whom, determine the content areas and finding funding for this project. Rory Robinson asked if the station helps identify prospects to help with funding? Clayton assured the commission they do help in trying to locate prospects for funding. It is estimated to produce the video will cost \$35,000.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee

Steve Morris gave the finance report. Ron Howard is no longer with the commission. Steve passed out copies of the financial report to the commission members. Steve explained the four columns: budget, expenditures, total expenditures and the available balance as of November 11th, 2003.

Steve pointed out that while there is \$1500.00 left in the postage/shipping, the UPS shipping of brochures to highway welcome centers and rest areas has not been posted yet. Steve has been informed that that can take three months or longer before being posted.

Steve explained the mandated reserve to the new members of the commission. Steve also explained that the Budget Agency may release funds if the commission needs funds to match any grants it might receive. Rory Robinson suggested using the value of his time spent working on the Corridor Management Plan as an argument to release matching funds. There was also discussion about possible matching \$4000 in grants received by Banks of the Wabash for signage of the water trail.

Nominating Committee

Steve Morris reported the nominating committee nominated John Gettinger for president and Lucky Neiburger for vice-president. The floor was opened for nominations. Tom Straw made a motion that the nominations be closed. John Isaacs seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Tom Straw made a motion that the candidates be elected by acclamation. Keith Ruble seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Water Trail Committee

John Gettinger reported about the water trail meeting that was held December 8th, 2003 at the WRHCC office in Lafayette (see attached report). John thought the meeting was well attended. John also reported there is interest from Illinois communities in participating with this project.

In discussion, it was mentioned that guidelines should be established for communities to use. Mercedes Brugh stated that tourism should be a part of this. Cheri Wagner from Tourism said that the Department of Tourism and State Parks are working together in printing the new 2005 Recreation Guide. Marianna Weinzapfel suggested holding public information meetings with landowners along the Wabash River to

make sure they are agreeable with what the Commission is doing pertaining to the Water Trail. John Gettinger proposed warning trail users against trespass. Tom Straw recommended the commission research both Indiana and Illinois laws regarding public and private ownership of land along the river. Rory Robinson suggested the water trail be discussed further at the upcoming retreat.

Education Committee

John Gettinger reported that the education committee has not met. John spoke of the Agriculture Extension Agency Service in Vigo County working with 4-H children and taking them to the river. John said many people have been asking when the next "Teach the Wabash" will be held. Susan Benner reported that she is working with the Arrowhead RC& D to have the next "Teach the Wabash" in Cass or Miami Counties sometime during the summer months. Lucky Neiburger said somebody should step forward to become chairperson for Water Trail, Education and Newsletter committees since John has been elected president of the commission.

Newsletter Committee

Wabash Reflections was e-mailed out on 1-13-2004. Susan said there was a limited number of hardcopies available to those that do not have e-mail addresses. The next three names chosen to submit an article were: Mercedes Brugh, John Isaacs, and John Gettinger. These articles are due March 1, 2004.

At this time Susan passed out printouts of a quote from Central Printing for printing of the annual newsletter *L'Esprit de Ouabache*. Susan said that last year there were 1,500 copies produced, and there are about 100 copies left. Susan's recommendation is to print only 1,400 copies. The price of the newsletter being done in black ink will be \$445.00, in only blue ink it will be \$479.00 and in black and blue ink on the first page it will be \$557.00. Susan asked for the Commissions opinion on this matter. It was decided to check the budget before proceeding.

OLD BUSINESS

At Tom Straw's request, renewal of Susan Benner's contract was brought to the Commission's attention. Mike Mettler asked Susan if she was willing to enter into another contract with the Commission. Susan said "Yes". Susan left the room while the Commission discussed whether or not to enter into another contract with her. John Gettinger moved that the commission enter into another contract with Susan. John Isaacs seconded the motion. There was discussion about possible modifications to the contract, including possibly increasing the contract amount. John Gettinger suggested a subcommittee. Keith Ruble, John Gettinger and Tom Straw agreed to serve on the subcommittee. Keith will also discuss with Susan. Because of difficulties involved in increasing the contract amount, John Gettinger moved to amend his motion to read that the Commission enter into a new one year renewable contract with Susan Benner with the understanding that the contract total will be \$59,750/year. John Isaacs seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Corridor Management Plan

Rory Robinson announced the Corridor Management Plan was finished. Rory pointed out the acknowledgements on page two. There have been 30 printed copies distributed. Susan Benner is going to draft a letter of announcement. There was a discussion of how many plans to print, how to distribute them and where to acquire money for the project. Keith Ruble asked about the cost between color and black and white. Rory said the 30 copies of the Resource Manual printed in black cost \$40.00. Rory suggested just using the website. Lucky thanked Rory for his work.

501(c)(3) status for Friends of the Wabash

Tom Straw reported paying the \$15.00 state reporting fee for the Friends of the Wabash. There was no report from Ron James.

Wabash Video

Mercedes Brugh made a motion to proceed with the video and Tom Straw seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Susan Benner has some examples of WFYI videos if anyone is interested in viewing them. Rory Robinson suggested the video be issues oriented. Rory gave a suggestion focusing the video on land use past, present and future. Malia Savarino suggested the video be developed as a primary segment with special feature segments. Tom Straw envisions the video developing into a portfolio. Rory Robinson suggested a series. Tom Straw and Mercedes Brugh will head up a subcommittee for the video project.

WRHCC Retreat

Susana Benner reported there were three possible locations to have the planning retreat on March 10th. Rae Schnapp of the Hoosier Environmental Council offered free use of the Indiana Community Action Center on 18th Street in Indianapolis. Turkey Run State Park as of January 2nd still had 79 rooms available. The cost would be \$65.49 with tax for a room with one bed and \$76.59 with tax for a room with 2 beds. It would also cost \$60.00 for the use of the conference room. Dan McCain offered the use of the Wabash Erie Canal Interpretive Center. After some discussion, Mike Mettler made a motion to have the retreat at Turkey Run State Park. John Gettinger seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Updating Agenda Format

A draft for updating the agenda was distributed to each of the Commission members. Keith Ruble mentioned the fact that at the last meeting visitors had to wait until almost the end of the meeting to speak. Keith feels that if such things as: letters sent and letters received and committee reports were included in the newsletter it would speed the meeting along.

Lucky Neiburger said the meeting was never intended to finish before 4 pm and that he would does not want to unnecessarily limit discussion on issues. John Gettinger suggested it might help to start the meeting at 11 am, break for lunch and then resume the meeting at 1 pm. It was mentioned that field trips and subcommittee meetings are often held prior to the regular meeting, and that discussions over lunch may violate the open door law. Mercedes Brugh stated a meeting from 1 PM to 4 PM is best for her Tom Straw suggested the commission approve the meeting agenda as first order of business at future meetings. John Gettinger made the motion to go over and discuss the agenda at the March 10th meeting. Mercedes Brugh seconded the motion. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

County Appointments to the WRHCC

Steve informed the Commission that of the 19 counties, 14 counties had sent appointments. There is a new list of appointments being drawn up.

Letters sent

Susan Benner sent a letter of support to the Upper Wabash River Basin Commission in regards to their 205(j) grant application to IDEM.

Susan Benner also sent a letter of support to Tippecanoe County in regards to their EPA grant application to assess brownfields in the county.

Letters Received

Susan Benner reported receiving a letter from Subaru Isuzu Automotives(SIA) stating the Commission did not get the SIA Foundation Grant to purchase a LCD projector.

Susan also received newsletters from:

- Hoosier Rails to Trails Council
- Sycamore Trails Blazer-Sycamore Trails RC&D
- Little River Wetlands Project
- Wild River Ramblings-Des Moines County Conservation's Newsletter
- Project Archaeology Newsletter
- Banks of the Wabash

Susan received a Thank You card from the Partnership for Turtle Creek for the letter of support we provided for their application for IDEM's 319 Clean Water Grant.

Susan also received Fall Specials from the Center of Watershed Protection containing information on purchasing publications from the Center of Watershed Protection.

Steve Morris received a public notice from IDEM about a bank stabilization project on Wildcat Creek, just upstream from the confluence with the Wabash River.

Locations for 2004 WRHCC Meetings

- March 10th, Parke County, Turkey Run State Park
- May 12th, Miami County, location to be announced
- July 7th, Lafayette, location to be announced
- September 8th, Sullivan County, Merom Conference Center
- November 10th, Indianapolis, Indiana Government Center

Other Items

Lucky Neiburger suggested the commission postpone printing of the yearly newsletter, *Le Esprit de Ouabache*, until we have a better picture of the commission budget at the March commission meeting.

Dan McCain requested a letter of support for Transportation Enhancement funding for building a canal boat. Tom Straw made a motion to send a letter of support to Dan McCain for the application for funding. Mercedes Brugh seconded the motion. Motion passed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Comments by Commission Alternates

Keith Ruble asked if meetings have to be made up if they are cancelled. The answer is no.

Comments by Visitors

None

Final Comments by Commission Members

Lucky thanked Janet Fawley for serving on the Commission and said she contributed so much. Lucky also thanked the Commission for allowing him to serve as president. John Gettinger said Lucky has done a terrific job as president and thanked him for a job well done. John also said he wants to make an impact, and he will be aggressive.

John Isaacs reported that his farm sale went well. They had a large crowd. John Isaacs also informed the Commission that Anne Lynk has retired.

ADJOURNMENT

John Gettinger made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mercedes Brugh seconded. Meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting-March 10th, 2004 at Turkey Run State Park, Marshall, Indiana



***Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission
Executive Director's Report
January 5, 2004***

De-Trash the Wabash - The Banks of the Wabash has formed a Cleanup Committee to organize river cleanup events. Tippecanoe and Vermillion Counties are interested in holding a cleanup activity. Both cleanup events are tentatively scheduled for the late summer of 2004. The Cleanup Committee is made up of individuals from Tippecanoe County, West Lafayette, and Lafayette Parks Department, Eli Lilly Tippecanoe and Clinton facilities, Banks of the Wabash, DNR- Outdoor Recreation, Hoosier Environmental Council/Riverkeeper, WRHCC, and NICHES.

Wabash Water Trail Committee – The WRHCC hosted a meeting of the Wabash Water Trail Committee. A detailed report of the meeting will be provided during the Wabash Water Trail Committee Report.

Wabash 4-H Project – Attended the meeting to incorporate the Wabash River into the 4-H curriculum for Sullivan, Vigo, Parke and Vermillion Counties. A report of the meeting will be provided during the Education Committee Report.

WFYI Meeting – Met with Clayton Taylor, Vice President of Productions with WFYI about developing a video on the Wabash River. More discussion on this issue under new business.

Annual Report – A 2003 annual report was written and distributed to 19 Soil and Conservation District offices to use in their annual reports.

Water Trail Presentation – Gave a presentation to the West Lafayette/ Lafayette Convention and Visitors Bureau on the development of the Wabash Water Trail.

Wabash Reflections Newsletter – Distribution of the electronic newsletter Allen, Wabash and Huntington County articles with additional articles submitted by Ron Howard (Fountain County).

Wabash Community Signs – E-mailed the contact person at PENN Products twice about getting a quote for the signs, still haven't heard back from them.

**Water Trail Meeting
December 8, 2003
10:00 am**

In Attendance

Randy Moore – Arrowhead RC&D

randall.moore@in.usda.gov

Vic Leas – Sycamore Trails RC&D

John Gettinger – Sullivan County WRHCC Representative

Bernie Dahl – Banks of the Wabash & Purdue University

bdahl@purdue.edu

Dale Brier – IN DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation
Lucky Neiburger – Tippecanoe County WRHCC Representative
Chuck Weis – Wildcat Guardians
Susan Benner – WRHCC
Ted Leverman – IN DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife
Keith Ruble – Vigo County WRHCC Representative

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Susan Benner gave a brief description of the Wabash Water Trail project and the inventory of access sites already established. Susan also gave some background information on the trip that was taken to Libertyville, IL to view the water trails established in northeast Illinois.

Keith Ruble suggested we send a letter to all the Chambers of Commerce communities along the Wabash to inform them of this project and to possibly get support from them and local businesses.

Who the water trail will be geared to was discussed. Debate over whether the water trail should be focus solely on canoes and kayaks or do we want to include motorized boats ensued. If the water trail is to potential receive any money from DNR Fish and Wildlife motorized boats may need to be included. A possible compromise may be to use the term “small crafts” which include boats with small motors that could still use a canoe launch.

What the next step of the Water Trail Committee needs to be determined. A prioritization needs to be established, should interpretive signs be the first issue tackled, the establishment of additional access sites with camping facilities or the publication of map like brochures that water trail users could take with them in their boats.

Another area more research needs established in is the legal use of sandbars. It was the committee’s beliefs that land adjacent to the river is public up to the high water level of the river.

School partnerships – Bernie Dahl described what his students might be able to do to help with the project (designing signs, developing logos, and evaluating access sites). Keith Ruble is going to determine if any partnerships could be formed with Indiana State University or Rose Hulman students on this project.

A draft mission statement for the Water Trail project
“To develop and promote the Wabash River into a water trail”

Dale Brier indicated that DNR – Outdoor Recreation is working on coming up with a definition of a water trail. Keith Ruble wanted to know if they are also working on a definition of a canoe camp.

Ted Leverman indicated the need to contact DNR Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology before digging any holes for signs.

Chuck Weis will help the Water Trail Committee with the publicity of the project.

Susan Benner will put together the draft MOU’s before the next meeting.

Our next meeting will take place February 2nd 10:00 am at the WRHCC office.